

# BAHANA FOREST TRAIL

Saint Moling founded a monastery here in the seventh century convenient to the River Barrow, which the Vikings sailed up in the tenth century to raid and destroy. The very impressive ruins of a fourteenth century abbey can be visited on the upper settlement with interpretation in the nearby heritage centre. Adjacent to the monastic site is a well preserved motte and bailey, a large grassy hillock (the motte) which was the site of a twelfth century Norman fortification.

The route follows the long distance Barrow Way in part. The full distance of the Barrow Way walking route stretches some 114km from St. Mullins to Robertstown, in Co. Kildare. A beautiful walk of 8km along the towpath to Tinnahinch/Graiguenamanagh can also be enjoyed from here featuring frequent weirs and the lofty Brandon Hill rising up to your left.

**Trail Name:** Bahana Forest Loop

**Type of trail:** Local loop walk

**Trailhead:** Car park at St. Mullins Quay

**Services:** Car park, picnic area, restaurant & shop (seasonal)

**Distance/Time:** 4.5km (approx 1 hour)

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Terrain:** River towpaths and forestry track

**To suit:** Beginner or experienced walker

**Minimum gear:** Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone

**OSI maps:** OSI Discovery Series 68.

*The Blackstairs, Mount Leinster and the Barrow Valley from East West Mapping*  
[www.eastwestmapping.ie](http://www.eastwestmapping.ie)

**Emergency Services:** 999 / 112

**Contact email:** [secretar@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:secretar@carlowcoco.ie)

**A-B:** Leave the car park and follow the towpath along the river. You will be walking upstream with the River Barrow on your left. After approx. 15 minutes, follow a canal away from the river to reach St. Mullins Sea Lock – the river is tidal up to this point. The River Barrow is one of the great ancient highways of Ireland's Ancient East, offering a route inland from the Irish Sea at Waterford Harbour. Shallow bottomed boats were required for many centuries until a series of canals and locks were constructed in the eighteenth century to facilitate the passage of larger boats. Websters were the lock keepers here in the 1950s when commercial navigation finally yielded to road transport.

**B-C:** Continue by the canal to reach a track junction. Turn right uphill to reach a crossroads where you turn left on the main track. Bahana Forest takes its name from the Irish word 'Beitheanna', meaning a place of birch trees.

**C-D:** Reach a three way junction and keep left to follow the forest road back down towards the river.

**D:** Reach a lower track and turn sharp left to arrive back down at the towpath on the River Barrow, noting a lime kiln on your left side. Lime kilns were commonly used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to burn lime stone rock in order to derive lime, which in turn was spread on the land to increase productivity. Turn left and follow the towpath back downstream with the river on your right. Soon the canal leaves the river and you follow the towpath to reach your outward route. As you walk, think of the horses that once plied this towpath pulling barges up and down the Barrow Navigation.

## PRINCIPLES

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel and camp on durable ground
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimise the effects of fire



Practising a 'Leave no Trace' ethic is very simple. Make it hard for others to see or hear you and leave no trace of your visit.

## CARLOW TOURS APP



For more information on County Carlow visit the Carlow Tours app, available as a free download from the Google App Store or log on to [www.carlowtourism.com](http://www.carlowtourism.com)



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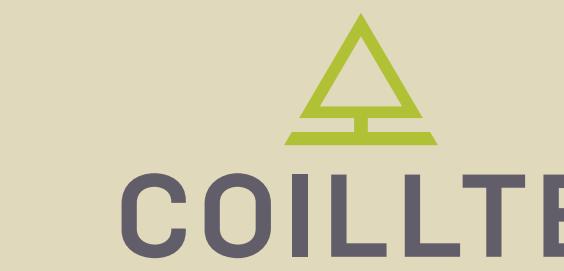


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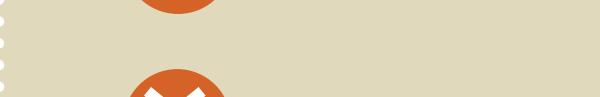


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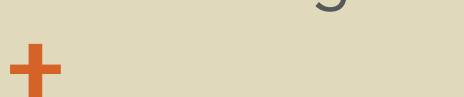
Accommodation



Viewpoint



Heritage Site



Graveyard



The picturesque village of St. Mullins is nestled alongside the banks of the River Barrow in the heart of Ireland's Ancient East. Though a quiet and charming rural village today, St. Mullins has a long and illustrious history, and many fascinating stories to discover.



Aerial view of ecclesiastical ruins with River Barrow behind

It is believed that St. Moling's remains lie within the graveyard. He made a promise to everyone buried there that they would go straight to heaven - a belief that is still held today!



The quayside

However the renown of St. Mullins also attracted less pious guests. The monastery survived several Viking attacks during the ninth and tenth centuries and the Normans built an earthwork castle known as a motte and bailey here in the late twelfth century.

You can still see the large mound of the motte outside the grounds of the monastery today. This would once have been topped with a wooden tower, providing a formidable defence for the new secular power on this holy site. St. Mullins Heritage Centre, located in the former Church of Ireland church, provides a fascinating account of local history including publications, church records, maps, old photographs and artefacts. For opening times please see Facebook.

This map board was produced by Carlow County Council in conjunction with Carlow Tourism and St. Mullins Area and Recreational Tourism (SMART)



The village takes its name from Saint Moling, a seventh century Irish monk who established his monastery here. There are many tales of the miracles of Saint Moling. One story describes how he dug a mile-long mill race with his own hands, a feature that can still be seen faintly running through the fields close by. His monastery grew in fame as a centre of worship and learning.



Base of the Round Tower at St. Mullins

Several medieval Kings of Leinster are buried in this hallowed ground. With such belief, the monastery became an important place of pilgrimage. A tradition that still continues to this day.

Inside the enclosure of the monastery you will find many echoes of its long history.

You can discover the remains of several early medieval churches and domestic buildings, a ninth-century High Cross, a ruined eleventh-century abbey and a fascinating collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century gravestones. St. Moling's Holy Well is located a short distance away to the north.



Graveyard at St. Mullins with the Heritage Centre to the rear

